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SUBJECT: IRELAND SHARES U.S VIEWS ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: SECSTATE 57036

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mary E. Daly; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

¶1. (C) Ireland will not support countries seeking membership to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) that have been sanctioned by the UN Security Council for human rights violations, said Eamonn MacAodha, Director of the Human Rights Unit at the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), to whom Emboff delivered demarche points and a copy of reftel letter for Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern on April 13 (original was sent to Foreign Minister Ahern April 11). Additionally, MacAodha stated that the GOI understands the USG decision not to run for a seat on the Council this year, but supports U.S. membership as soon as possible, operating under the general principle that the "U.S. on is better than the U.S. off."

¶2. (C) MacAodha told Emboff that the GOI was tracking the election process closely and would likely follow the coordinated EU voting parameters being developed by the EU Working Group on Human Rights. He does not expect the EU parameters to be country-specific, but rather a set of criteria by which the human rights records of countries seeking membership on the HRC should be measured. The working group is set to issue conclusions after its April 20 meeting, at which point MacAodha said he would give Emboff a better sense of how Ireland would vote.

¶3. (C) Ireland is not running for membership on the Council this year, said MacAodha, though various Irish NGOs will likely soon discuss with the DFA's Human Rights Unit the prospects for, and timing of, Ireland's future bid for membership. In deciding whether to pursue membership, noted MacAodha, the GOI will gauge the Council's agenda and take into account the fact that Ireland recently completed a term on the Human Rights Commission. The GOI will also consider the merits of waiting until its next EU Presidency (in roughly ten years' time), which would give its membership more political weight.

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